



THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS  
WHEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
PUT THEIR HEADS TOGETHER.



ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA

DISCOVER. DREAM. DESIGN.



July 2007

Dear Neighbor,

Imagine a community so invested in its future that 200 people would sit down for a dialogue about community-visioning and see their work create, in just one decade, a new town center and more than 300 innovations and initiatives, including becoming the inaugural Children First community in the nation. **Imagine...St. Louis Park.**

Imagine a community so committed to the community and so engaged in this visioning process that it would stand up and say, "Let's do it again, bigger and better" and embark on the process again, this time its participants numbering more than 1,000 engaged community members. **Imagine...St. Louis Park.**

"I'M PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY,  
AND I'M PROUD OF YOU AND YOUR COMMITMENT  
TO THE BETTERMENT OF THIS COMMUNITY."

We're sharing this *Report to the Community on Vision St. Louis Park* with you with the expectation that you'll see what the community has told city officials they'd like to accomplish.

In 1994, when we began the first Vision St. Louis Park process we listened to you about concerns or problems you perceived in the city: a lack of a "downtown" district and sidewalk and trail connectivity were among the dozens of issues. With your help, we created solutions. When we began the second Vision St. Louis Park process in 2006, there was less talk about problems and much more talk about the future. Some would say this demonstrates the evolution of a society. Both of these community visioning approaches are critical to our future success as a community. We asked the community to discover, dream and design over the last two years, and they delivered. That was the process. This report is a guide for our city and a promise from city leaders to deliver what you're asking for in a community.

We ask for your continued support, to view this document not just as a report, but as your city's manifesto. We ask you, the community, to **imagine...St. Louis Park.**

Sincerely,  
Jeff Jacobs, mayor

*City Council*

Phil Finkelstein, At-Large  
Paul Omodt, At-Large  
Susan Sanger, Ward 1

John Basill, Ward 2  
Loran Paprocki, Ward 3  
C. Paul Carver, Ward 4

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WHAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR  
IN A COMMUNITY.



"PARK NICOLLET CONTRIBUTES TO THE GOOD OF ST. LOUIS PARK AS A WHOLE. OUR COMMITMENT IS TO BE A PARTNER OF - AND FOR - THE COMMUNITY."  
 - MICK JOHNSON, PRESIDENT, PARK NICOLLET FOUNDATION, SR. VP PNHS



ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA

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## DISCOVER.

*"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back."* - Maya Angelou



In the "World is Flat," author Thomas Friedman, a St. Louis Park High School graduate and New York Times columnist, challenges organizations to focus on imagination, ideation, innovation, and adaptability. Friedman believes these areas will keep organizations viable and cutting-edge into the future. We believe these areas of focus will do the same for our community and incorporated them into our visioning process.

### IMAGINATION

The city and four key community-vision partners – St. Louis Park School District, TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, Park Nicollet Health Services and Children First – utilized the "appreciative inquiry" interview process to engage residents and workers through face-to-face interviews, as individuals and in groups, as well as through a web-based interview tool. More than 1,000 community participants were involved

in the initial process, followed by hundreds who attended town meetings, and others who joined vision action teams. The partners felt personal interviews would be paramount to finding out what was really important to our community and give them insights unattainable through other exercises.

**The goal: work toward positioning St. Louis Park for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.**

Appreciative inquiry begins with the assumption that the community is in a good place and seeks information to move to an even better place. The process brings into view the factors that give life to a living system and articulates the possibilities that will lead to a development of a future that all participants envision. It is a process that could not have been successful without the triumphant community visioning process completed in the mid-1990s.



Park Nicollet Clinic, St. Louis Park





"ST. LOUIS PARK IS A SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY  
THAT THINKS AND ACTS LIKE A SMALL TOWN.  
EVERYONE HAS A VOICE, AS WELL AS A VOTE."

- BOB RAMSEY, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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DISCOVER.

#### IDEATION

Eight Vision action teams were formed based on data gathered from the interviews. The eight teams addressed the environment; transportation; sidewalks and trails; gathering places; community events; housing; arts and culture; and diversity.



#### INNOVATION

A partnership was created that included the school district, TwinWest Chamber, Children First and the city's largest employer, Park Nicollet Health Services. The community dialogue included an intergenerational sampling from our faith communities, neighborhoods, schools and businesses.

#### ADAPTATION

In February of 2007, the St. Louis Park City Council held an intensive two-day workshop to analyze and review the work of the Vision action teams. The result is a roadmap for the future of our community with specific goals for the immediate future. This roadmap builds on the roadmap from the first visioning process and is expected to carry the city forward for the next decade.



"ST. LOUIS PARK HAS A LOT TO OFFER. WOLFE LAKE IS GOOD FOR FISHING. I ALSO LIKE SWIMMING AT THE REC CENTER. PLUS COFFEE SHOPS ARE CLOSE."  
 - PIERCE INSKEEP, STUDENT, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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# DREAM.

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now." - Johann von Goethe

During the course of the Visioning process, the eight Vision action teams created a "Book of Dreams" that shares the eight Vision statements, as well as examples of what St. Louis Park should look like in 2016 in each of the eight, specific vision areas. The teams also established specific objectives and action plans for achieving these dreams.



A goose and its goslings in a St. Louis Park marsh

## < ENVIRONMENT

St. Louis Park's overall outdoor and built environment is clean, green, healthy, safe, and aesthetically pleasing. Community members are responsible stewards of the environment and realize their actions today influence the greater ecology inherited by future generations.



Kids' Eco Fair at Parktacular



Northbound traffic on Hwy 100

## < TRANSPORTATION

St. Louis Park offers a variety of transportation modes allowing residents and visitors to easily and inexpensively travel throughout the city and entire metro region.





"I LIVE IN ST. LOUIS PARK BECAUSE IT'S CLOSE TO EVERYTHING - LAKES, WORK, DOWNTOWN. IT HAS ALL THE BENEFITS OF BIG CITY LIVING, WITHOUT THE HASSLES."  
 - SVEN SUNDGAARD, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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DREAM.



Greenway Trail

< **SIDEWALKS & TRAILS**

St. Louis Park has a connected network of safe sidewalks and trails to encourage physical fitness and non-polluting transportation options. The city encourages trail use by members of all ages and physical abilities.

**GATHERING PLACES**

St. Louis Park has many gathering places – including centers dedicated to recreation, youth activities, and the arts. Parks and shopping centers also serve as key contact points where people can meet and fully experience the city’s many amenities.

v



Excelsior & Grand

< **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Activities and celebrations throughout the year provide ways for residents, workers and visitors to come together and keep the St. Louis Park community welcoming, vibrant, and active. In the fullest sense of community, such events provide an opportunity to for residents of different ages and backgrounds to connect on common ground.



Parktacular Grand Day Parade



DREAM.



"ST. LOUIS PARK HAS A HISTORY OF CARING ABOUT EDUCATION. SCHOOLS ARE PRODUCING KIDS WHO CAN GO OFF ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND SUCCEED."

- JERRY TIMIAN, 4TH GENERATION ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT

"ST. LOUIS PARK IS INCLUSIVE TO ALL CITIZENS. ANYONE WHO WANTS THEIR OPINION HEARD JUST HAS TO SPEAK UP. LEADERS ARE OPEN TO CHANGE."

- PORTIA BYRD, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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Fern Hill Neighborhood



St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts  
"Our Town: Faces & Places" photo exhibit

## HOUSING

St. Louis Park's diverse housing options enable citizens to remain in the city through all stages of life. Providing living arrangements to accommodate all generations' needs enhances the chances of building a strong community and sense of ownership.

## ARTS & CULTURE

Diverse arts and cultural activities permeate all aspects of life in St. Louis Park. The entire community is enriched by the free flow of artistic expression.

## DIVERSITY

St. Louis Park is a city where everyone feels and experiences a sense of belonging. People of all ethnic backgrounds and religious faiths feel free to live, work and play according to their beliefs.



Torah study by members of the Minneapolis  
Community Kollel, St. Louis Park



"CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK LEADERS ARE WILLING TO LISTEN TO THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS. THEY LOOK TO FORM COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE."

— BRAD BAKKEN, CITIZENS INDEPENDENT BANK,  
PAST CHAIR, TWINWEST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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## DESIGN.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.." - Margaret Mead*

The involvement of more than 1,000 residents, workers, businesspeople, organizations and agencies reminded the city about its greatest strength—an engaged community of leaders and innovators. It's now up to all of us to exceed these high expectations that all of our community have set for us. Based on the results of the Vision process and goals and objectives identified by the community, the City Council has adopted the following strategic directions for the city to become engaged in for the next 18 months. This is just the beginning. The City Council will continue to use the results of *Vision St. Louis Park* as a guide for the future.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION

St. Louis Park is committed to being a connected and engaged community.

#### Focus will be on:

- Conducting research to determine what makes a neighborhood organization strong, viable and sustainable with an aim toward increasing and strengthening neighborhoods.
- Developing an expanded and organized network of sidewalks and trails.
- Promoting regional transportation issues and related dedicated funding sources affecting St. Louis Park including but not limited to Hwy. 100 and SWLRT.
- Evaluating and investigating additional north/south transportation options for the community.
- Increasing use of new and existing gathering places and ensuring accessibility throughout the community.
- Exploring creation of a multi-use civic center, including indoor/winter use.
- Directing the Human Rights Commission to examine the Diversity section of *Vision St. Louis Park* and develop goals/recommendations for actions.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION





"CHILDREN FIRST EMPOWERS YOUTH TO BUILD SELF-IMAGE. IT UNIFIES INDIVIDUALS YET OFFERS DIVERSE THINKING FOR A WELL-ROUNDED PERSPECTIVE."

— NATASHA HULTMANN, STUDENT, CHILDREN FIRST CO-CHAIR



## ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA

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## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship. We will increase environmental consciousness and responsibility in all areas of city business.

#### Focus will be on:

- Expanding energy efficiencies in the City's operations.
- Educating staff and the public on environmental consciousness, stewardship and best practices.
- Working in areas such as the rehab loan program, development projects, permits etc, encourage (and provide incentives where appropriate) green building design (LEED), creation of open spaces, environmental innovations, etc.
- Preserving, enhancing and providing good stewardship of our parks.
- Investigating the need and purpose for an energy/ environmental commission.

### HOUSING

St. Louis Park is committed to providing a well-maintained and diverse housing stock.

#### Focus will be on:

- Remodeling and expanding move-up, single-family, owner-occupied homes.
- Property maintenance to foster quality housing and community aesthetics.
- Working towards affordable single-family home ownership throughout the city.

### THE ARTS

St. Louis Park is committed to promoting and integrating arts, culture, and community aesthetics in all city initiatives, including implementation where appropriate.



"ST. LOUIS PARK'S FIRE DEPARTMENT ALWAYS  
ADDRESSES MY MEDICAL NEEDS IMMEDIATELY WHILE KEEPING  
MY SPIRITS UP. THOSE RESPONDERS ARE THE BEST!"

- SORAH BLUMENFELD, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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## PARTICIPANTS.

The City of St. Louis Park remains indebted to the many individuals working on the Vision action teams during this process:

Jim Brimeyer, *Chair of Vision Action Steering Committee*

### ARTS AND CULTURE ACTION TEAM

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Mary Juberian  
Dave Payne  
Karoline Pierson





"ST. LOUIS PARK IS A WONDERFUL CITY AND WILL  
BECOME EVEN BETTER AS IT OPENS ITS DOORS  
TO MORE DIVERSE POPULATIONS."

- MOHAMED ABDI, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT

"I LIKE THAT ST. LOUIS PARK NEVER RESTS ON ITS LAURELS  
EVEN THOUGH IT'S ALREADY A GREAT CITY. IT'S ALWAYS  
TRYING TO FIND NEW WAYS TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE."

- GENE ROEHLKEPARTAIN, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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Tanya Warren  
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"WE MOVED TO MINNESOTA FROM MICHIGAN AND CHOSE  
ST. LOUIS PARK BECAUSE WE LOVE THE PARKS, THE TRAILS,  
THE ABUNDANCE OF SHOPPING, AND THE SHORT COMMUTE."

- CARRIE BOWLER, ST. LOUIS PARK RESIDENT



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## RECOGNITIONS

Vision St. Louis Park is a community partnership with the City of St. Louis Park, the St. Louis Park School District, TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, Park Nicollet Health Services and Children First.

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Jim Brimeyer, Chair of Vision Action Steering Committee

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Linda Trummer for her volunteer writing in the Book of Dreams

Jan Loftus, Community volunteer

Our volunteer Organizational Development professionals

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Cover: Todd Pernsteiner

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Geese: Rahel Aynalem

Eco Fair: Chuck Dahl

Transportation bridge: Isaac Goldman

Fern Hill Neighborhood: City of St. Louis Park

Excelsior & Grand: City of St. Louis Park

Parktacular Parade: Chuck Dahl

Friends of the Art exhibit: Rick Person

Torah study: Marcie Murray



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